of the guide pins and reinstall them only after the cable is routed completely and tensioned.

I felt comfortable with the job, and overconfidence got the better of me. This job was supposed to have been a simple remove and replace. I got a little complacent with the task.

I should not have been in such a hurry. I would be lying if I said I didn't want to get out of there on a duty weekend.

It was hot that day, and the tail cone of an UH-3H can get miserable sitting in the flight-line sun.

Finally, I should have had someone else look at the installation. Even with my CDQAR designation, it doesn't hurt to get another pair of eyes on it.

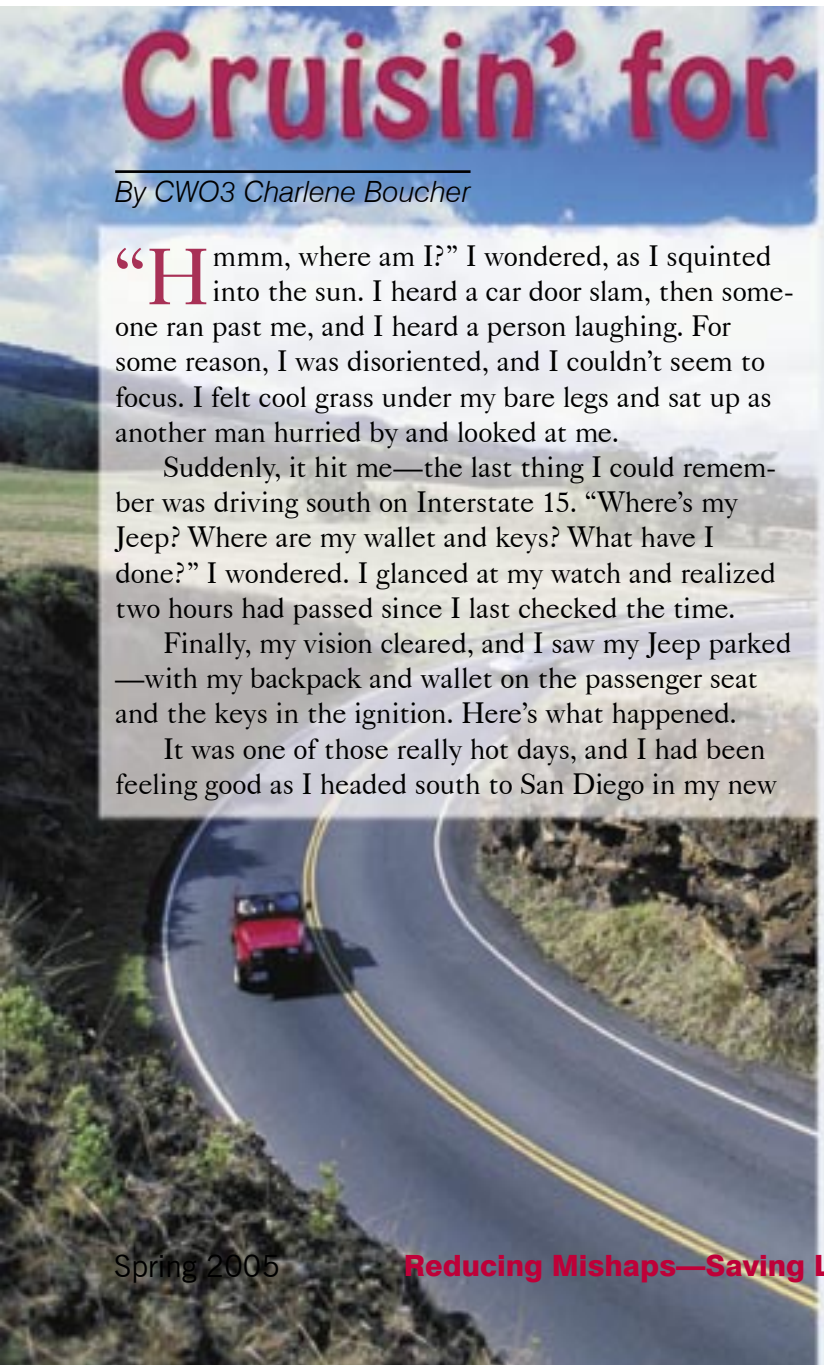
So how do we prevent a recurrence? No matter how simple a job or how many times you've done it, read the pub thoroughly. It might be that one sentence or warning you skip over that could prevent something like this from happening. Maintenance control was not rushing us that day. Just take your time. Liberty is always nice, but getting the job done correctly is the top priority. One mistake can prevent a flight crew and passengers from returning from a mission. Probably the most important thing is to put your ego in check and not be overconfident. Ask someone else to look at your work. It does not mean you don't know what you're doing; it just means no one is perfect.

AM2 James Cameron wrote this article while deployed with HC-2 Desert Ducks in Manama, Bahrain.

Attention to detail is the key to maintenance success, and the author recognizes the multiple factors that led up to this incident. However, asking someone else to look at your work is not a sign of weakness. It is required by NAMP 4790.2H: "CDQARs shall not inspect their own work and sign as inspector." —Ed.

Cruisin' for a Bruisin'

By CWO3 Charlene Boucher



"Hmmm, where am I?" I wondered, as I squinted into the sun. I heard a car door slam, then someone ran past me, and I heard a person laughing. For some reason, I was disoriented, and I couldn't seem to focus. I felt cool grass under my bare legs and sat up as another man hurried by and looked at me.

Suddenly, it hit me—the last thing I could remember was driving south on Interstate 15. "Where's my Jeep? Where are my wallet and keys? What have I done?" I wondered. I glanced at my watch and realized two hours had passed since I last checked the time.

Finally, my vision cleared, and I saw my Jeep parked —with my backpack and wallet on the passenger seat and the keys in the ignition. Here's what happened.

It was one of those really hot days, and I had been feeling good as I headed south to San Diego in my new Jeep Wrangler. The top was down, and the hot wind was whipping through my hair. "I love this Jeep!" I said to myself.

There was only one problem: I had consumed my last root beer, no town was in sight, and my eyelids were getting heavy. "Maybe if I take an ice cube from the cooler... sheesh, it's hot; the ice is melted," I thought. "I'll splash some water on my face, instead."

Unfortunately, none of these efforts worked. I really was having trouble keeping my eyes on the road, my head off the steering wheel, and the Jeep between the lines. After slapping myself silly, I finally found a rest area 10 miles down the road. I pulled in, parked and sprawled on a nice patch of thick, green grass under a small shade tree. In no time, I passed out—never once thinking about the hazardous situation in which I had placed myself before I pulled off.

We hold safety and risk-management training at work all the time, and I'm always preaching these items to my junior troops. In this case, though, I took too long to heed my own advice. It was scary thinking about what could have happened to me. "What if I had fallen asleep at the wheel?" I thought. "What if I had been robbed, beaten and left stranded with no vehicle?" The reality is that we can't afford just to "talk the talk." We also have to "walk the walk."

CWO3 Charlene Boucher was assigned to VAW-117 when she wrote this article.